THE WORLD OF MEDIEVAL MEDICINE

FWIS 150

SPRING, 2019

Dr. Claire Fanger
Tuesdays 1-3:50 PM in HUM 328
Office: Hum 207
Email: cfanger@rice.edu
Office hour: Thursday noon-2 PM, or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This writing-intensive seminar is intended to introduce students to the important conversations about the human body and bodily dispositions in the medieval Christian world. We look at medieval bodies through both medical and religious lenses, examining the context of the medieval understanding of medicine by exploring the network of relations between natural, social, human, and divine bodies. The course fosters the development of oral and written communication at the university level through extensive reading and writing about medieval Christian texts, images and objects, as well as through students' independent research, ongoing class discussion, and constructive critical interaction with other students' written work.

It is a basic principle that all medicine must be understood in relation to the broader culture in which it is practiced. In the Middle Ages, medicine was based in the ancient Greek idea that the body (the microcosm) reflects the cosmos (the macrocosm). Christian theology upheld this principle, and maintained further that the body of Jesus held the divine and human worlds together. Bodily and medical metaphors abound everywhere: sin is an illness, cured by the medicine of the sacraments; the Christian church is a body with Christ at its head.

This course thus traces some of the basic information and relational structures necessary to make sense of the broader culture in which medieval Christians understood human bodies, and treated mental and bodily illness. How did their experiences of pain, sex, childbirth, and death interact with larger concepts of God, nature, and the stars? What role did angels and demons play? First-hand accounts by medieval writers provide the main platform from which we get a picture of medieval people's relation to their own bodies and the world around them. Secondary readings are drawn from history (especially history of medicine), ritual studies and psychology.

Accommodations: Any student with a disability requiring accommodations in this course is encouraged to contact me after class or during office hours. Additionally, students need to contact Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

Required purchase: Faith Wallis, *Medieval Medicine: A Reader.* University of Toronto Press, 2010. (in campus store):

Requirements: You are required to be in class having read the assigned readings and prepared to discuss them. Written assignments for the course include weekly response papers, a brief midterm essay, a longer final essay, and an informal presentation of work in progress. For more detailed descriptions of each of these assignments, see pp 7 and 8 of this syllabus.

> **NB Regular attendance is required.** This is a weekly seminar, where one class is equal to one week of class time; thus **three classes (=three weeks) missed without excuse earn a failing grade**. If you are sick, let me know by email before the class begins. Let me know if you become aware of a scheduling conflict at any time in the course of the term**.**

For other helpful precisions and admonitions, along with a list of specific learning objectives, please consult the last two pages of this syllabus (pp. 9-10).

SCHEDULE

Week 1. Jan. 9: ***Introduction***. We'll talk about medieval and modern medicine and explore the frameworks in which medicine works (medieval, modern, and alternative). We'll also look at some digitised medieval books online to see what learning medicine required. In preparation please read the following short pieces:

Common misconceptions about medieval medicine by Bryon Grigsby: http://the-orb.arlima.net/non_spec/missteps/ch4.html

Homeopathy (Wikipedia article): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homeopathy Homeopathy is not medieval; it is an entirely modern practice. While not in use by ordinary physicians, there are schools of homeopathic medicine; you can be diagnosed and treated by a specialist, and homeopathic remedies are available in most pharmacies. This makes it a good example of a modern form of alternative medicine**.**

Week 2. Jan. 16: ***The world's body at creation.*** This class focuses on medieval cosmology. Biblical ideas and concepts drawn from Plato's cosmological work *Timaeus* came together in medieval scientific understandings; both works influence conceptions of the human body in sickness and health. This week we look at the bible and some Platonic and Neoplatonic texts that were influential in medieval scientific thinking. **FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE.**

Background: "Plato, Aristotle, and the Medieval Scientific Worldview" pp 37-58 in in Elspeth Whitney, *Medieval Science and Technology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004). **To be posted**.

Bible: Genesis 1-3, the creation of the world and humans; use any bible or go to: http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=0&b=1&c=1

Timaeus by Plato: creation of the world and humans, **just read lines 403-954** online here: http://www.doc.ic.ac.uk/~rac101/concord/texts/timaeus/

Lactantius (a 3rd-century pagan who converted to Christianity): read all of "On the Workmanship of God" (an early Christian perspective on the human body) http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0704.htm (you may skip chapter 12 which is in Latin).

Macrobius Read chapters 11-13, from *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, trans William Harris Stahl (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952). This platonic fifth century commentary on a dream vision by Cicero was very influential on medieval thinking. **Cicero** *Scipio's Dream* is also included with this reading. **To be posted**.

Week 3. Jan. 23. ***Interpreting the world's body***. To see into the middle ages, we must try to grasp not merely what the basic frameworks of factual knowledge were, but also how meaning is constructed by and through those frameworks, and how interpretive frameworks are acquired disseminated. This class will focus on medieval methods and aims of interpretation. Readings from Augustine and Bede show how Genesis was used as a base for scientific reflection; the readings from Wallis and the sermon by Hildebert show how the cosmic model affected ideas both of sickness and sin. **SECOND RESPONSE DUE.**

Background: "Introduction: The Popular Bible," pp 1-18 in Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible* (DS Brewer, 2003) (**To be posted**.)

Augustine (4th century father of the Church), Extract from *On the Literal meaning of Genesis*. Trans. John Hammond Taylor (NY: Newman, 1982). (**Selection to be posted**).

Bede (an 8th century English monk), Extract from *On Genesis*, trans C. Kendall (Liverpool Univ. Pr, 2008). (**Selection to be posted**).

Primary source text from Wallis: **Reading 16:** The mass of St Sigismund and the Sigismund fever charm; and **reading 17:** prayer to the earth, and prayer to herbs.

Hildebert of Lavardin, a 12th century teacher and bishop: "Second sermon for Pentecost" trans. Joseph Miller, pp. 182-187 in J. H. Miller, et al. *Readings in Medieval Rhetoric* (Indiana Univ. Pr. 1973) (**To be posted**.)

Week 4. Jan. 30. ***Sick bodies and the science of healing*.** As with much else, the medieval body in health or sickness is not seen as disjunct from the divine world but as permeable to it. Yet the medical profession rooted in a body of natural knowledge that was complex and systematic, worked out on the basis of a need to balance the four humors and an underlying congruence of world and body. This week's readings explore scientific aspects of medicine. **THIRD RESPONSE DUE**

Background: **for insight into why medieval cures may have been effective:** read Hugh Brody, "Ritual, Medicine and the Placebo Response" in The Problem of Ritual Efficacy, William Sax et al, eds. Oxford, 2001, pp 151-67. **To be posted**.

Primary source texts from Wallis, ed. *Medieval Medicine: a Reader* (Toronto, 2010) hereafter "Wallis": Reading 5 and 6 Alexander of Tralles (6th century Byzantine) "Signs that Colic is generated by Choleric Humor"; and Pseudo-Galen, "on Pneumonia"; and **Readings 23 and 73**, the "defense of human medicine" from the *Lorsch Leechbook* (circa 800) and Hildegard of Bingen (12th century abbess) from *Causes and Cures*.

***Antipocras*: a treatise on alternative medicine, by fr. Nicholas of the Preaching friars** circa 1270; read the text, pp 1-11, translated from Latin by William Eamon, here https://www.academia.edu/6179784/ANTIPOCRIAS. A Medieval Treatise on Magical Medicine. By Brother Nicholas of the Preaching Friars c. 1270 . Translated by William Eamon

Week 5. Feb 6**.** ***Divine diseases and divine cures***. Where the science of medicine proved unavailing, a variety of alternative options remained available, including prayer, pilgrimage to a saint's shrine, or treatment with sacred artifacts like fragments of relics or holy water, which might prove more effective than standard medical approaches. (The interpenetration of mind and body in healing is not less mysterious today; the reading from Anne Harrington shows some of the varied effects of the cultural conditioning of the body.) **FOURTH RESPONSE DUE.**

Background: A modern exploration of culturally/historically conditioned bodies, "The power of Suggestion," chap. 1 in Anne Harrington, *The Cure Within* (Norton, 2008). **To be posted**. **See also the historical situation of divine healing in context** by Sarah Ritchey, "Affective Medicine: Later Medieval Healing Communities," Journal of Medieval Religious Cultures 40 (2014): 113-143. **To be posted**.

Bible: Read Luke 4 and 5 (for examples of healing miracles by Jesus); http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=1&b=3&c=4

Primary source texts from Wallis: **Readings 12, 13, and 14** Theodore of Sykeon, Gregory of Tours, John of Beverly.

Agobard of Lyons (9th century) offers interpretations of certain illnesses: http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/Agobard-OntheDeceptionofCertainSigns.asp

A miraculous healing, from William of Malmesbury (12th century): http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/wulftrans.html

Week 6. Feb 13. ***Collective bodies and shared flesh.*** The fact of Christ's humanity became increasingly important in the later middle ages and is reflected increasingly the arts, theology, and also in devotional prayers and meditations on Christ's life and passion. It has ramifications in the economy of penance, for humans share all flesh even as Christ shares ours. **FIFTH RESPONSE DUE.**

Background: Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages" 79-117 in *Fragmentation and Redemption*. Zone, 1991. **To be posted**.

Bible: some images of Christ as the head of the body of Christendom: Romans 12: http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=1&b=6&c=12 ; and Colossians 1, esp 1:12-20 http://www.latinvulgate.com/verse.aspx?t=1&b=12

Guibert of Nogent (a 12th century monk): Guibert recounts his mother's visions, Book 1, chapter 18 of his autobiography: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/guibert-vita.html#bk1ch18

John Tauler (14th century Dominican mystic) *Meditations on the life and passion of Our Lord***,** chapter 34 (the passion) http://www.ccel.org/ccel/tauler/meditations.iii.xxxiv.html

Week 7. Feb 20. ***Edible bodies: partaking of Christ.*** As the devotion to Christ's body rose, so too devotion to the Eucharist or sacrament of the host. The Eucharist was conceived medicinally; theologically, it was a medicine that treated the soul, but in popular Christianity, it might have applications to the body as well. This week's readings illuminate some of the relations between the soul and the body's wellness. **SIXTH RESPONSE DUE.**

Background: Miri Rubin. "Christ's suffering Humanity" pp 288-311 in *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge 1992). **To be posted**.

Anselm (11th/ 12th century scholar, philosopher, author of many popular prayers): *Meditation on Human Redemption* http://www.ccel.org/ccel/anselm/meditations.iv.xi.html

Hugh of Lincoln's devotion to relics (late 12th century); reading 31 in John Shinners, ed. *Medieval Popular Religion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Pr. 2008). **To be posted.**

Angela of Foligno (13th century religious woman), chapter 5, pp 158-167 of her *Memorial* in *Complete Works*, trans. Paul Lachance (Paulist Press, 1993) **To be posted**.

John Tauler (14th century Dominican mystic) *Meditations on the life and passion of Our Lord* chapter 4 (last supper) http://www.ccel.org/ccel/tauler/meditations.iii.iv.html

Week 8. Feb 27. ***The body at death*.** The desire to imitate Christ was not limited to imaginative enact Feb 2ments; it could extend from anticipation of actual acts of martyrdom, to explicit desires to approach death in order to learn from it what Christ faced during his passion. This class examines closer approaches to actual death. **BRIEF ESSAY DUE.**

Background: Judith Perkins, "Death as a Happy Ending" pp 15-40 in The suffering self: pain and narrative representation in the early Christian era (Routledge, 1995). **To be posted.**

Bible: the passion story, Matthew 26-27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19: all at: www.latinvulgate.com (navigate with left hand sidebar)

Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas (early and iconic 3rd century Christian martyrdom; record sometimes attributed to Tertullian): http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/perpetua.asp .

Julian of Norwich (late 14th century mystic) Revelations of Divine Love (Penguin, 1998) read the short text (complete pp 3-38). **To be posted**

Week 9. Mar 6. ***More uses of bodily pain*.** While recalling the passion of Christ may have been helpful in rendering meaningful ordinary human sickness and death, and could also serve to solidify the sense of community, pain was put to other uses; it could be used to prove guilt or innocence, to purify, to sanctify, and more. This week's readings explore a few of these alternate uses of bodily pain. **PROPOSAL FOR FINAL ESSAY DUE.**

Background: "Heroic asceticism and self-injurious behavior" pp 17-36, in Jerome Kroll and Bernard Bachrach, *The Mystic Mind* (NY: Routledge, 2005). **To be posted**.

On ordeals: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/ordeals1.html

Another passage on ordeals: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/water-ordeal.html

St. Catherine of Genoa (15th century), treatise on purgatory (24 pp): https://archive.org/stream/TheTreatiseOnPurgatory#page/n7/mode/2up

Week 10. Mar 13. NO CLASS -- SPRING BREAK

Week 11. Mar 20**. *Gendered bodies*.** In medieval Christian writings, women were seen as weaker both in mind and body and more likely to yield to temptations of the flesh. Constructions of female reproductive bodies were laden with negative value judgments. At the same time, women's childbearing was a necessary function in society. The article by Green looks at women's health care and female healers. The complexity of women's position spiritually in relation to their bodies is examined by Bynum. Primary readings include texts on female physiology and medical controversies over female seed. For a real woman's spiritual memoir, we look at some episodes in the life of Margery Kempe.

Background: Monica Green, "Women's medical practice and health care in Medieval Europe" Signs, 14 (1989): 434-473. **To be posted.**

Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Female Body and Religious Practice in the Later Middle Ages" 181-238 in *Fragmentation and Redemption*. Zone, 1991. **To be posted**.

Primary source texts from Wallis: **Reading 39** from Trotula on the feminine physiology and suffocation of the womb; and **Reading 46** Aristotle vs Galen on the generation of the embryo**.**

Margery Kempe (15th century), *The book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B. Windeatt (Penguin, 1985), chapters 1-11, 20-22, 34-37. **To be posted.**

Week 12. Mar 27. **Special Medieval Problems: Plague and Leprosy**. Plague and leprosy were both incurable in the middle ages, and both posed special kinds of problem. Leprosy was chronic and long term, and plague in its worst manifestations sudden and lethal. What was it like to confront such diseases in situ? How did people react to the public and private health challenges of these diseases?

Background: **On plague** and its global transmission and effects, Monica Green "Taking Pandemic Seriously" and Crespo & Lawrenz, "Heterogenous Immunological Landscapes and Medieval Plague" in *Pandemic Disease in the Medieval World: Rethinking the Black Death*, ed. Monica Green *The Medieval Globe* 1 (2014) online at https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/medieval_globe/1/ **On Leprosy** see Elma Brenner, "Recent Perspectives on Leprosy in Medieval Western Europe" *History Compass* 8/5 (2010): 388–406 online https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2009.00674.x

Primary source texts from Wallis: **Reading 69, i**nterpreting symptoms: the difficult case of leprosy**; Reading 96,** a twelfth century English Leper Hospital; **Readings 84, 85, and 86,** all on the special challenges of plague.

Week 13. Apr 3. **Student Seminar presentations. PLEASE POST PRESENTATION DRAFTS on Canvas**

Week 14. Apr 10. ***Alien bodies, Jewish bodies*.** Medieval devotion to the body of the suffering Christ was designed to inspire emotions of empathy and love, yet such emotions have an ugly obverse face: hatred. Medieval anti-Semitic writings depict Jews engaged in perversion and violation of the symbols most sacred to Christians, in the Eucharist, and in the person of Christians, especially children**.** At the same time, Jewish doctors, notable for their learning, served a Christian clientele. This week's readings are geared to understanding the complex relation between bodies and communities.

Background: Jeremy Cohen. "You Killed your Lord," chapter 3 in Cohens book *Christ Killers* (Oxford, 2007). **To be posted**.

Primary source texts from Wallis: Reading 77: Jewish Doctors: the case of Provence.

Account of ritual murder by Jews (William of Norwich, 12th century) http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1173williamnorwich.html

Some anti-semitic legends http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/antisemitic.html

Solomon bar Samson. A Jewish perspective on the slaughter of the first crusade (spring, 1096): http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1096jews-mainz.html

Week 15. Apr. 17. **Bodies of knowledge and the bodies of books.** *Visit to Woodson research center to handle medieval manuscript leaves*. There will be some discussion beforehand of handmade books. See online images of manuscript pages: http://scholarship.rice.edu/handle/1911/13014/browse?type=dateissued *__FINAL PAPER DUE__*

ASSIGNMENTS

SIX SHORT ASSIGNMENTS: Response papers due each week from week 2 – week 7, to be posted on the Canvas "discussion" space any time before class starts. Each one should not be longer than one page. They may take up to an hour to write. I like to think of these short assignments as "microessays."

The microessays should focus on specific questions, large or small, generated by your medieval (primary source) readings. Thus, each week as you read, jot down several questions you have about the material. The question that kicks off your response paper can address one text, or even a small portion of the text, or it can be a comparative question that draws together information from two or more texts. It can also concern an image or object that comes up in the reading, or one that we discussed in the previous class.

Begin the microessay by writing down a question. Then make an attempt to answer it in one to three paragraphs. Make it clear which text, or portion of text, or image the response addresses. You may draw your answer from the text, image or object under scrutiny, or run a quick google search if you need more information to understand the question. If you get answers from the internet, remember to *track your sources*. Include URLs for any web pages you consult. If you get an answer from another page of the same text, or a different class reading, jot down the page number or other mnemonic so you can find it later.

Response essays are meant to be written quickly; they can be very informal, but should have a structure, and show thought. They are intended to provide focal points for class discussion, but they will also serve as writing practice and "seed writing" for the final essay. The stakes are low on each piece, but collectively through the feedback you get on each one, they will help you learn how to approach medieval texts and images, how to evaluate the quality of secondary sources, how to figure out the context and meaning of historical documents and material objects, and how to structure an argument about them.

ONE BRIEF ESSAY. Due date: Feb 27. **Length**: 4-5 pp. For this essay, pick any one of the six response papers you have written on any topic where you feel there is more to be said, or simply more that you would like to know. Explore the topic a little more thoroughly; find a book or two (or more) on the topic (or text), jot down your further ideas in relation to your reading, and put this together as a formal4-5 page essay with source references. Here you should use any formal documentation style you are comfortable with. (I will cover the main documentation styles in class prior to the mid-term recess.) Also note that five pages is a *maximum*. You may find you wind up with more material than you can fit into five pages. That's ok; you can use it later.

Give yourself three to five days to research and brainstorm for this short essay, a day or two to draft it, and another day to revise, proof and polish. Feel free to consult your peers or the peer consultants at the CWOVC if you want a response to your work at any stage in the process. Your short essay, like your response papers, should be posted on the Forum at any time prior to the class in which it is due.

ONE LONGER ESSAY. Final project, including seminar presentation and essay. Due Dates: Proposal for final paper due March 6. **Seminar presentations of work in progress**: April 3**. Finished essay due:** April 17. **Length:** 12-15 pp. including notes and bibliography.

Assignment Description: For the final essay you may choose to elaborate further on the topic you treated in the short essay, or you may choose to pick up any other idea from one of your response papers and develop it further or take it in a new direction. If you have another brand new idea of burning urgency, this is allowed, but you will need to do a little more work on the proposal.

Proposal. **Due on or before** March 6. Your proposal should include a copy of your prior response paper or short essay, with a one paragraph statement about where you want to take it or how you plan to develop it, the sources you've already consulted, and those you still hope to examine. If you had an overload of material for your short essay, here is the place to use it.

If you have a new idea, or want to engage a topic not addressed in a prior essay, please submit a one page description of what you want to do, including the secondary sources you hope to consult.

Seminar presentations on April 3 will be around 15- 20 minutes with time reserved afterwards for discussion. Input from other students should help you focus and clarify your ideas before you polish your final draft.

A little bit of writing every day will yield a better, more coherent product than a lot of writing all at once. Allow yourself 8-10 days for research, note taking, and rough writing as you get your ideas together, and about 4 days to shape the essay that will form the core of your presentation. A powerpoint is helpful for the oral presentation but is not required. The written draft can be rough, about 9-10 pp will be enough to present; it does not need final form documentation or bibliography at this stage, but the shape of your argument should be visible. Presentation drafts should be posted on the Forum by Nov. 22, for written comments from your peers, as well as the professor. A response from peer consultants at the CWOVC may also be sought. Be sure to make an advance appointment

Final Essays, officially due April 17, should have complete correct documentation for any facts or opinions from secondary sources, as well as any quotations from any text. For best results allow yourself at least 2-3 days to finalize your draft, filling out the argument, responding to comments on drafts, completing notes and bibliography, and proofreading. Use any documentation style.

Useful style manuals:

Chicago http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

MLA http://library.csun.edu/egarcia/documents/mlacitation_quickguide.pdf

APA http://libguides.wwu.edu/ld.php?content_id=18901398

Percentages:

15 % class participation

25 % six response papers

25 % short essay

35% final essay and seminar

FURTHER USEFUL PRECISIONS AND ADMONITIONS

Center for Written, Oral and Visual Communication: You are encouraged to make appointments with the peer consultants at the CWOVC, located on the second floor mezzanine of the library. You can talk to them at any stage of the writing process. The consultants will not proofread or edit your work, but they can provide feedback on topics such as the organization of your paper or presentation and the coherence of your argument. They can also point out persistent errors in grammar and idiom if you feel this would be helpful.

Assessment criteria: The student's goal is basically to learn to participate in academic conversation around the course topic, optimally in such a way as to teach the professor something she doesn't already know. Below are criteria for assessment of written assignments:

A. An essay in the A range reveals a passion on the part of the author to transmit one or more original ideas* to the audience**, and is fairly successful*** at doing so.[1] It has a visible argument in which all the most important elements are comprehensible. **It teaches the professor something she doesn't already know**.

B. An essay in the B range shows work put into engaging the course topic, but may fall short of the A range in one of two ways. It may show passion to transmit ideas, but key points in the trajectory will be so unclear that its argument (if there is one) remains only in part visible; or it may be clear and comprehensible as a report on its data set, but have a vestigial or weak argument. **It doesn't teach the professor anything she doesn't already know, though probably teaches the other students in the class something.**

C. An essay in the C range shows engagement with the topic that is partial or hasty. The research may have uncovered some correct information that is appropriate to the discipline, but coverage is incomplete; the author appears uncertain about what he or she wants to convey. **It teaches little to anyone save perhaps the writer.**

D. An essay in the D range is rudimentary. It shows little engagement with the topic, and/or little interest in it. It may be unfinished or contain wrong information or information not suitable to the discipline. It has no argument. **Little or no teaching has occurred.**

How (not) to get an F: On written assignments, an F is given for non-delivery of an assignment. A grade of F is also possible for demonstrable plagiarism on any assignment (see "Academic Honesty, below). An F for the course is possible if you miss too many classes (See "Requirements" on p. 1).

Academic honesty and Rice Honor Code: All students will be held to the standards of the Rice Honor Code, a code that you pledged to honor when you matriculated at this institution. For detailed information consult the handbook: http://honor.rice.edu/honor-system-handbook/. Demonstrable plagiarism can result in an F for the assignment and sometimes for the course, as well as having other unfortunate consequences. In this class, you will be doing research for a number of essays in which you will draw facts and ideas from the interpretations and arguments of

[1] *"Original idea" = innovation building on but going beyond textbook/secondary works. This requires good judgement about quality of information and grasp of main arguments of both primary and secondary texts.
**"Audience" = other students and the professor.
***"Fairly successful" means that something that feels important or useful has been communicated to a majority of audience members including the professor. For optimal success, the communicative spirit of good academic practices taught during the semester needs to be observed throughout the essay.

other scholars. You must attribute ideas and words deriving from other's work, formally or informally, as noted in the specific assignment descriptions.

Student learning objectives:

By taking FWIS 150, students will:

- Enhance their understanding of the central place of writing and communication in the learning process and in academic life.
- Learn strategies for analyzing, synthesizing, and responding to college-level readings.
- Improve their ability to communicate correctly and effectively in writing and in speech, taking into account audience and purpose.
- Become comfortable with writing as a process and learn strategies—for instance, prewriting, outlining, and revision – for working through that process.
- Learn appropriate use of the work of others and, where necessary, specific practices of citation.
- Learn to articulate oral arguments and to respond productively to arguments of others in formal presentations and in class discussion.

Additionally students will:

- Learn to understand and interpret the religious traditions of medieval Catholicism by examining its dimensions as historical, social and cultural phenomena.
- Gain basic objective knowledge of the beliefs, practices, and institutional history of medieval Catholicism and its relation to medical practice and conceptions of the human body.